were ignorant of that excellent paper. The original intention of this naturalist was to produce a full and complete Monograph of the order, illustrated by plates. To this undertaking he was led by its having been proposed by the French Institute in 1809; but being prevented, at that time, from fulfilling this intention on the extensive plan at first proposed, he published his Prodromus in 1812, though without abandoning his original object, the accomplishment of which his untimely death* has now unhappily rendered hopeless. Had that project been carried into effect, the present work would have been unnecessary; and it is matter of great regret that so correct a hand as that of Schweigger had not completed the task, the outline of which he had so well sketched. This tract, from its having appeared in a work comparatively little consulted by naturalists in general, has escaped the notice of several subsequent writers. Merrem in particular, whose synonyms are so numerous as to prove that he has examined almost every previous work on the subject, was wholly ignorant of that of Schweigger, the publication of which had preceded his own by several years.

Notwithstanding that the excellence of Schweigger's work consists, in a great degree, in its clearness and precision with regard to the identification of species, and that in many instances the difficulties arising from the different appearances of the same species at different ages are cleared up, and the discordant synonyms of former authors corrected,—yet when it is considered that the information which he possessed of actual specimens, went but little further than the collection of the Paris Museum, it will not appear wonderful that even these objects should have been but imperfectly fulfilled. He enumerates seventy-eight species, from which more than thirty must be deducted, either as varieties, or as repetitions of the same species, described under different names and copied erroneously from other authors.

A new classification of Reptilia by Fitzinger†, appeared in 1826, in which the class is divided into two orders: the first, termed *Monopnoa*, includes all those which respire air during the whole of life,—the Reptilia of Merrem; the second, *Dipnoa*, consists of the *Batrachia*. The Testudinata are here re-

* Schweigger was assassinated by his guide during a journey in the interior of Sicily.

† *Neue Classification der Reptilien, nach ihren Natürlichen verwandtschaften, &c.* von L. I. Fitzinger: Wien, 1826.

duced to the rank of a Tribe, and are divided into five families, which were adopted, though with considerable improvements, by Mr. Gray. This arrangement differs but little from the quinary distribution which I proposed at nearly the same period*, and without any knowledge of the existence of such a work as Fitzinger's. The differences which exist between the method of this author and that which I proposed, are almost all in favour of the former; and I have adopted the general plan, with the improvements of Mr. Gray, and some subsequent modifications of my own, in the present work.

In 1830 a work, purporting to present "a Natural System of the Amphibia†," made its appearance, from the pen of Dr. Wagler. The unnecessary and unnatural multiplication of genera, founded upon very trifling distinctions, into which this author has divided the Testudinata, appears to me to evince a very inadequate appreciation of the true importance of characters, and is remarkably contrasted with an error of the opposite kind in some other parts of his work; whilst the quotations from other authors are in some cases so incorrect as to convey an exactly opposite impression to that originally intended‡. The Plates which illustrate the work, and of which one fasciculus only has yet appeared, comprising the Testudinata, are beautifully executed, and exhibit not only the external form, but the anatomical characters also, of each genus.

Passing over those casual additions to our information, which have now and then appeared in the description of new species, or the occasional establishment of a genus, I proceed, with mingled pleasure and reluctance, to make a few observations on a portion of the "Synopsis Reptilium" of Mr. Gray, first published as an Appendix to Griffiths's translation of Cuvier's "Regne Animal," and subsequently, with considerable alterations, as a distinct work§. As my object at present is not so much to give a critical examination of the different authors to whom I may have occasion to allude, as to point out to whom we are most indebted for the gradual improvement of our knowledge in this

* This had remained unpublished for a considerable period, and at length appeared in the Zoological Journal, vol. iii. p. 513.

† *Natürliches System der Amphibien &c.* von Dr. Joh. Wagler: München &c. 1830.

‡ See particularly the characters of my genera *Kinixys* and *Pyxis*. The essential character of the former, as given in the Linnæan Transactions, is, "*Dorsi* pars *posterior* mobilis." Dr. Wagler gives it, "Thoracis pars *antica* mobilis." This is in fact the character of *Pyxis*, of which this author says, "Thoracis pars *postica* mobilis."

§ Synopsis Reptilium; or Short Descriptions of the Species of Reptiles: by John Edward Gray, &c. Part I. 1831.